

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An image data retrieval apparatus for retrieving desired image data from an image database having a plurality of items of image data registered therein, comprising:

5 an extractor for extracting an image of a predetermined region from said image data registered in said image database;

a retrieval key image designator for designating said extracted image as an image serving as a retrieval key; and

10 a retriever for using said retrieval key image to retrieve from said image database image data containing an image identical or analogous to said retrieval key image.

2. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said image of said predetermined region is an image of a face of a person.

3. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said designator designates more than one said retrieval key image.

4. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said extractor extracts more than one said image of said predetermined region from said image data in said image database for storage and said designator designates a desired retrieval key image from said more than one image of said predetermined region stored.

5. The apparatus of claim 4, wherein said retriever uses said designated retrieval key image to retrieve more than one item of image data containing an image identical or analogous to said retrieval key image.

6. The apparatus of claim 4, wherein said designator designates more than one retrieval key image.

7. In order to retrieve desired image data from an image database

having a plurality of items of image data registered therein, an image data retrieval program causing a computer to effect the steps of:

5 referring to said plurality of items of image data registered in said image database, and extracting an image of a predetermined region included in said image data;

designating said extracted image of said predetermined region as an image serving as a retrieval key; and

10 using said designated retrieval key image to retrieve from said image database image data containing an image identical or analogous to said retrieval key image.

8. An image data retrieval apparatus for retrieving desired image data from an image database having a plurality of items of image data registered therein, comprising:

5 a retrieval key image extractor for extracting images serving as a retrieval key for search through said plurality of items of image data registered in said image database;

a storage for storing said extracted retrieval key images therein;

10 a retrieval key image designator for designating a desired retrieval key image among said stored retrieval key images; and

a retriever for using said designated retrieval key image to retrieve from said image database more than one item of image data containing an image identical or analogous to said retrieval key image.

9. The apparatus of claim 8, wherein said extractor extracts an image of a predetermined region included in said image data registered.

10. The apparatus of claim 9, wherein said image of said predetermined region is an image of a face of a person.

11. In order to retrieve desired image data from an image database having a plurality of items of image data registered therein, an image data retrieval program causing a computer to effect the steps of:

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extracting an image serving as a retrieval key for search through  
5 said plurality of items of image data registered in said image database;  
storing in a storage more than one said retrieval key image  
extracted;  
designating a desired retrieval key image among said more than one  
retrieval key image stored; and  
10 using said designated retrieval key image to retrieve from said image  
database more than one item of image data containing an image identical  
or analogous to said retrieval key image.

12. An image data retrieval apparatus for retrieving desired image  
data from an image database having a plurality of items of image data  
registered therein, comprising;

5 a retrieval key image extractor for extracting an image serving as a  
retrieval key for search through said plurality of items of image data  
registered in said image database;

a storage for storing more than one said extracted retrieval key  
image therein;

10 a retrieval key image designator for designating more than one  
desired retrieval key image among said more than one retrieval key image  
stored; and

a retriever for using said more than one designated retrieval key  
image to retrieve from said image database image data containing an image  
identical or analogous to said retrieval key image.

13. The apparatus of claim 12, wherein said extractor extracts an  
image of a predetermined region included in said image data registered.

14. The apparatus of claim 13, wherein said image of said  
predetermined region is an image of a face of a person.

15. In order to retrieve desired image data from an image database  
having a plurality of items of image data registered therein, an image data

retrieval program causing a computer to effect the steps of:

extracting an image serving as a retrieval key for search through

5 said plurality of items of image data registered in said image database;

storing in a storage more than one said retrieval key image  
extracted;

designating more than one desired retrieval key image among said  
more than one retrieval key image stored in said storage; and

10 using said more than one designated retrieval key image to retrieve  
from said image database image data containing an image identical or  
analogous to said retrieval key image.

16. An image data retrieval apparatus for retrieving desired image  
data from an image database having a plurality of items of image data  
registered therein, comprising:

an image obtainer for obtaining information corresponding to an  
5 image;

a table for having recorded therein said information and an image  
serving as a retrieval key, correlated with each other;

a converter for referring to said table to convert said information to a  
retrieval key image; and

10 a retriever for using said retrieval key image to retrieve from said  
image database image data containing an image identical or analogous to  
said retrieval key image.

17. The apparatus of claim 16, wherein said information obtainer  
obtains more than one item of information.

18. The apparatus of claim 16, wherein said image of said  
predetermined region is an image of a face of a person.

19. The apparatus of claim 18, wherein said obtainer obtains  
information in a form of a name of a person.

20. In order to retrieve desired image data from an image database having a plurality of items of image data registered therein, an image data retrieval program causing a computer to effect the steps of:

- obtaining information corresponding to an image;
- 5        converting said information to a retrieval key image with reference to a table having recorded therein said information and an image serving as a retrieval key, correlated with each other; and
- 10      using said retrieval key image to retrieve from said image database image data including an image identical or analogous to said retrieval key image.